

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"I will go a little further in this way, and say, that were the French to succeed in seizing all the English goods and property in every part and place in Europe, and, were they to prevent such goods from being sent thither in future, I do not believe that it would, even in the smallest degree, tend to disable England either for the defending of herself, or the annoying of her foes."—POLITICAL REGISTER, 6th Dec. 1806.

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[834

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

"PERISH COMMERCE" (continued from p. 824).—There are three objections, usually urged against those, who, like me, contend, that commerce is of no service to this country.—FIRST, that, by the cessation of commerce, would be thrown out of employment a great number of persons, who now subsist by commerce, and, particularly, a great number of men, women, and children now employed in the manufacturing of goods for exportation.—SECOND, that, if commerce, or trade with foreign nations, were put an end to, we should not be able to obtain certain articles, which are of the first necessity, especially such articles as are required in the building and the rigging and the fitting out of ships.—THIRD, that, as the mercantile marine is the nursery of seamen for our ships of war, if commerce cease, the mercantile marine ceasing, of course, along with it, this nursery is destroyed, and, in a short time, though we shall have ships of war, we shall have no sailors.—In answer to the first of these objections, Mr. Spence has the following passage.—"All sudden changes in the system upon which a country has been accustomed to act, must be productive of some inconvenience; and there can be no doubt, that the loss of any extensive branch of our export commerce, would for a while be heavily felt, by that proportion of the manufacturing class, which had been employed in fabricating goods for that particular market. (We may observe, by the by, that the sticklers for the importance of commerce, do not particularly lament the loss of it, because of the inconvenience which such a revolution occasions to a large body of people, but because of the diminution of national wealth which they fallaciously fancy ensues.) The remedy, however, for this evil, is in our own hands. When, in consequence of the caprice of one nation, or the envy of another, the export of our manufactures is materially lessened, we have but to lessen our imports propor-

tionably, and to spend the money which we usually had consumed in the produce of other countries, in purchasing an additional quantity of the manufactures of our own. Thus, if the Americans persist in acting upon the non-importation law, which their pettish folly led them so hastily to pass, and in consequence, throw upon our hands the two or three millions' worth of woollen cloths, &c. which they have been accustomed to buy of us, we have but to prohibit the importation of tobacco, and the other articles which we get of them, and we shall speedily see them upon their knees, requesting us to let things go on in their old train. And the consumers in this country, who will then save the money they had before wasted in tobacco, have but to expend the sums so saved, in a new coat or two additional for each of them, and our manufacturers will not be sensible of the change, nor have occasion to regret, the substitution of a British, for an American, market. If Buonaparté succeed in his paltry scheme of preventing our trade with the Continent, a scheme which abundantly evinces the miserable littleness of his views on matters of political economy; we have but to abstain from importing a proportionate quantity of the luxuries we indulge in; to increase our consumption of home manufactures, and, far from being diminished, our wealth will be increased, and the prosperity of our manufacturers no ways affected by this master-stroke of policy, as its sage author doubtless deems it.—It may be urged, that though this plan, if acted upon, might answer the proposed end, yet it does not follow, that our consumers would be inclined to expend the money with which they had been used to purchase foreign luxuries, in articles which they could scarcely be likely to want, even though they were prevented from obtaining these luxuries; and consequently, if this were not done, that great distress would unavoidably ensue, amongst

“ the manufacturers of exports, from the
 “ loss of their market. It must be allowed,
 “ there is some force in this objection,
 “ when we recollect, that serious incon-
 “ venience has sometimes ensued, to parti-
 “ cular branches of the manufacturing
 “ class employed in fabricating goods for
 “ home consumption, when, by the caprice
 “ of fashion, a total cessation of demand
 “ for their manufacture has taken place; as
 “ in the case of the button and buckle
 “ manufacture, &c. But admitting the
 “ force of this objection, still a remedy for
 “ this evil may be found. In all such cases,
 “ the government of the country should in-
 “ terfere; and these are perhaps the only
 “ instances in which it should interfere in
 “ matters of trade. It seems only just,
 “ that every industrious branch of the com-
 “ munity should be protected from extreme
 “ misery, consequent upon sudden changes,
 “ like those in question; and it certainly
 “ can never be right, that the parishes of
 “ any particular town or towns, where any
 “ branch of manufacture fails, should bear
 “ the whole burden of supporting those
 “ who are thereby thrown into distress.
 “ Whenever, then, any large body of the
 “ manufacturing class is deprived, whether
 “ by the caprice of fashion in our own coun-
 “ try, or by our quarrels with other nations,
 “ of the usual market for their manufac-
 “ tures, it seems proper, that the state
 “ should support them, employing them in
 “ works of public utility, such as making
 “ roads, canals, &c. until, by the gradual
 “ demand for hands, from old branches of
 “ industry, or the institution of new ones,
 “ there is found for them independent and
 “ profitable employment. By this plan,
 “ the temporary inconveniencies, insepara-
 “ ble from a system of policy, in which ma-
 “ nufactures form a prominent feature, is
 “ borne, as it ought to be, by the whole
 “ community, and not by a single portion
 “ of it.”—I, for my part, see no necessity
 for any charge upon the national revenue,
 for the purpose of *making work* for manu-
 facturers thrown out of employment by a
 cessation of export commerce. For, let
 things alone to work their own way, and the
 consequence will be, not that manufacturers
 will, perhaps, become agricultural labour-
 ers; but, that they will, *indirectly*, add to
 that class, by filling, at the side-board, at the
 back of coaches, in the ranks of the army,
 and elsewhere, the places now filled by per-
 sons taken from the agricultural population.
 Manufacturers would not, all at once become
 expert ploughmen, but they would soon
 learn to do many things appertaining to

agriculture; and, as I observed in a former
 article, the land *always* calls for hands, and
 always yields a grateful return. After all,
 however, it is not to be doubted, that there
 would be many persons, who would fall up-
 on the parish in consequence of such a change
 as is here contemplated, and that the aug-
 mentation to the poor rates would be partial;
 but, it would be necessary that it should be
 so; because that would be the only means
 of effecting a dispersion of the persons now
 congregated together by the calls of export
 commerce; and, if the poor-rates were aug-
 mented, in some degree, the other taxes
 would be diminished by the same cause,
 commerce being one of the greatest drains
 upon the land and the labour, as has been
 proved in the case of the East India territory
 and its inseparable and never-ceasing wars.
 —Mr. Spence's scheme of employing the
 ousted manufacturers upon “ works of pub-
 lic utility” he has not, I am sure, duly con-
 sidered; or else he would have perceived,
 that that was the most effectual way of pre-
 venting them from finding out new sources
 of livelihood. To *make work* for people is
 to war against nature as well as common
 sense; and when this is done by a nation,
 and that too with a view of preventing a part
 of its people from being miserable, it is a
 mark of downright insanity. Let us try it a
 moment. “ Works of public utility” Mr.
 Spence talks of. Has the nation not already
 every thing that it *wants*? As fast as its
 wants, in the way of roads and canals, in-
 crease, does it not, in its own natural mode,
 take care to provide them? And, does not
 the provision keep an exact pace with the
 want? Surely it does, and always will.
 “ Aye, but, supposing a canal, for instance,
 “ not to be necessary; yet, if the money
 “ expended upon it go to support ousted
 “ manufacturers, who would otherwise be
 “ upon the parish books, it is a good to
 “ make such a canal.” No more a good
 than it would be to give the ousted manu-
 facturers money for throwing stones against
 the wind; and, it would have this mischie-
 vous effect, that, while the present cost of
 maintaining them would be the same, or
 greater, than if they were upon the parish
 books, it would be much *more durable*; be-
 cause, in the latter case there would be much
 more powerful motives for the finding out
 of new sorts of employment.—This idea
 of *making work* for people Mr. Spence has
 certainly borrowed from that wise practice
 of the parliament of making work for the peo-
 ple in Scotland, where, however, (observe it
 well!) it is not pretended, that any branch
 of manufactures has failed, that any want of

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prosperity is to be found, the work being made for the express purpose of preventing *agricultural* people from emigrating; that is to say, one part of the people is taxed to pay another part for throwing stones at the moon.

—I should like to hear Mr. Spence (who, I am pretty certain, is a Scotchman) give his opinion upon these *make-work* grants to his countrymen; and I am the more anxious upon this point, seeing that the work pretending public utility is, in this case, a canal to unite the Eastern with the Western sea, for the *advantage and extension of commerce!* I should like to have Mr. Spence's ideas upon this topic.—We have proved, in the former articles, written upon this subject, that whatever *taxes* seem to arise from commerce, do, in fact, arise from our own internal resources, commerce being merely the channel through which those taxes are collected. But, as appertaining to the objection, which we are now answering, we must notice the alarm that some persons feel, lest, commerce being destroyed, there would be an absence of all that wealth, which we now see individuals gain by commerce, and which is expended by them in taxes and in payments to various individuals. This wealth ceasing to be gained by commerce, many people ask, how are we to make up for the deduction which this loss will make from the taxes and from the sums expended in the employing of tradesmen and labourers? This alarm, to those who look not beneath the surface of things, is natural enough; for to such persons, who form a great majority of the nation, the money, gained and expended by the merchant, or exporting manufacturer, is regarded as so much wealth, which he, by his commerce, *brings into the country*; and, of course, the cessation of commerce must, to all persons seeing the matter in this point of view, appear to be the certain forerunner of a great defalcation in the taxes and also of a great falling off in the custom to tradesmen and in the employment of servants of every description. But, let us try this by a close examination into the real state of the case. *John a Nokes*, for instance, is a great seller of tea (would he were always as inoffensively employed); he supplies the race of *Timkins* (a thousand in number, all gentlemen of estates in land) with this article; and his profits, at ten pounds from each customer, amount to ten thousand pounds a year. From these profits Mr. Nokes, if he make true return, pays one thousand a year in income tax; with the other nine thousand he does various things; but, let us first pursue the income tax. Our pursuit is not very long; for, who is so short-sighted as not to per-

ceive, that this income-tax is, in fact, paid by the race of *Timkins*, who, if commerce were put an end to, would, of course, get no more tea, and who would have the ten pounds a year in their pocket (supposing them to expend it upon nothing else), which now go to the making up of the income of our friend *Nokes*. But, as their income would still be the same, how would the government be able to make up for the loss of *Nokes's* income-tax? Why it would, to be sure, make such an addition to the income of the *Timkinses* as would render the total amount of the tax just what it was before; and, it certainly would make no difference at all to the race of *Timkins*, whether they paid ten thousand pounds a year in tax to the government, or in profits upon tea to Mr. *Nokes*. —But, Mr. *Nokes*, who is a very liberal and spirited man, spends the other nine thousand a year of his income amongst tradesmen and servants and in largesses to the poor. Well! and if these nine thousands a year remained with the race of *Timkins*, would not they expend it, too, amongst their tradesmen and their servants and in largesses to the poor of their several neighbourhoods? They might not, perhaps, expend it precisely in the same way, in goods and in services of precisely the same sort; but, as no man but a madman attempts to hoard up his income, as it is, indeed, impossible for him so to do for any length of time, the race of *Timkins* would; by the end of the year, have expended, in one way or another, the whole of the nine thousand pounds, which, together with the former thousand paid in income tax, they before paid in tea profits to Mr. *Nokes*; and though Mr. *Nokes* and his family would be seriously affected by the change (for which one must feel some degree of regret), other trades and persons would derive the profits which he had lost; and, therefore, to say nothing about the total uselessness of the article in which he dealt, his ruin could not possibly diminish, either the source of taxation, or that of the income of tradesmen and agriculturists.—But, Mr. *Nokes's* fine house and park and gardens and hot-houses and carriages. Would they ever have existed, had it not been for commerce? Certainly not. The race of *Timkins* would have scattered the profits of Mr. *Nokes* in a way so as to prevent its producing such effects; and, to those who see any degree of *national power* and *security* likely to arise from the use of silk instead of woollen, marble instead of stone, fallow land instead of corn-fields, pine apples instead of cabbages and potatoes, coaches instead of waggons and carts, French

valets instead of English labourers; to all such persons the decline of Mr. Nokes's commerce must, I allow, be matter of deep regret.—Now, the doctrine which I am endeavouring to maintain, is, I think, by this illustration, made as clear as noon day. There will be enough to differ from me in opinion, and I shall be ready to convey their arguments to the public; but, I beg leave to request them, before hand, not to state, as *something new*, objections which I have myself anticipated, and endeavoured, at least, to answer; because, if they should do this, I must reject their communications, it being quite preposterous to suppose, that I can waste my time and weary the patience of my readers with a repetition of what I have already advanced. I would further beg of someone of those who may differ from me, to confine himself entirely to what has here been said about Mr. Nokes and the race of Timkins; and, generally, I would beseech those, who may honour me with their thoughts upon this important subject, not to expect to produce conviction in my mind by a display of fine high-sounding phrases about “commercial opulence; emporium of commerce; capital, credit and commerce.” I say, that, I am of opinion, that all these tend to weaken, rather than strengthen our country; tend to produce her subjugation, rather than to preserve her independance; and that, therefore, I see their approaching cessation with pleasure, rather than with sorrow. My reasons for this opinion and for this feeling I have given and shall give; and, if I am answered at all, I will be answered with reasons, and neither with declamatory phrases, nor with appeals to the opinions of others.—We now come to the SECOND OBJECTION, which is, “that, if commerce, that is to say, trade with foreign nations; were put an end to, we should not be able to obtain certain articles, which are of the first necessity, especially such articles as are required in the building and the rigging and the fitting out of ships.”—I shall first, as before, give Mr. Spence's answer to this objection, and then add such remarks as appear to me likely to be useful.—“It will be said, that though we might give up some of the luxuries which we import, without great inconvenience, yet, a very large portion of what we import, is absolutely necessary to us, and could not be done without.” This may appear, at first glance, to be the case; but if any one will examine a list of our imports, he will be surprised to find how few of the articles we get from other countries, are necessary even to comfortable and luxu-

rious existence; and of how comparatively small value these are, when compared with the immense amount of what we consume. We could not well do without some of the drugs used for dying and for medicine; we should want olive oil, perhaps, in the preparation of our woollen cloths; saltpetre (if we had not the art of the French chemists, to form it from its principles) for our gunpowder; turpentine, and the various denominations of wood, of which we do not grow enough for ourselves. Of all the rest of our imports, I can see scarcely one, that we might not very well do without, or find fully as valuable succedaneums for, from our own productions. Barilla, Turkey carpets, China ware, silk, fruit of all kinds, grocery of every description, (except perhaps, pepper), bar iron, linen of all kinds, skins of every sort, tar, in fact every thing besides the articles which I have pointed out (which no power on earth could hinder us from obtaining, and of which a few cargoes of broad cloth would annually purchase all we can possibly have occasion for), seem by no means necessary to us. Some may be of opinion, that we could not do without hemp, flax, and tallow, which we import from Russia; but there seems no reason why we might not grow a sufficient quantity of the two former articles for our consumption; and whale oil, of the fishery producing which we have a monopoly, will always abundantly supply us with the means of obtaining light, if our own produce of tallow be insufficient.—With respect to hemp, it is infinitely desirable, that we should raise as much in our own country, as would be sufficient, at least, for the supply of our navy; and probably no mode of effecting this, would be equal to the prohibition of its importation, which would at once create a demand for it, adequate to raise its price to the point, at which land could in this country be profitably devoted to its cultivation. The bounties already allowed for effecting this end, deemed by the legislature so important, are evidently inadequate to its accomplishment, since but little hemp is grown in this kingdom. It might cost five or ten pounds a ton more, if produced at home, than if imported from Russia; but this difference, or twice this difference of price, would be well sacrificed for the sake of our being independent of the world for this article, so essential to the existence of our navy. We are now at peace with Russia, and it

“ is to be hoped, may long continue so ;
 “ but if another Emperor Paul ascend the
 “ throne, or if we have a quarrel with this,
 “ or with any future sovereign, we shall lie
 “ entirely at his mercy : for, without cord-
 “ age, we cannot have ships, and at present
 “ all our hemp is received from Russia.
 “ In fact, until we grow as much of this
 “ article as is sufficient for the use of our
 “ navy, it is perfectly idle to talk of our
 “ being an independent maritime power.
 “ —It need not be apprehended, that we
 “ could not spare the quantity of land re-
 “ quired for the cultivation of hemp and
 “ flax. About six acres of land are re-
 “ quired for producing a ton of flax, and
 “ five acres for a ton of hemp ; so that, sup-
 “ posing we consume 10,000 tons of the
 “ former, and 40,000 tons of the latter,
 “ which is quite as much as we do consume,
 “ it would require only 260,000 acres to be
 “ applied to the cultivation of these articles :
 “ an extent which we can very well spare
 “ out of the twenty-two millions of acres
 “ of waste land which are to be found in
 “ Great Britain. All the hemp, however,
 “ requisite for the independence of the
 “ navy, might be raised from 20,000 acres ;
 “ and if, after the narrow escape we once
 “ had of being excluded for years from
 “ Russia ; and after the possibility which
 “ we have just witnessed, of our being shut
 “ out from all commercial intercourse with
 “ a whole Continent ; if, I say, we do not
 “ take immediate steps for the cultivation of
 “ this most indispensable of all our imports,
 “ to at least this extent, we shall be guilty
 “ of folly the most egregious, of improvi-
 “ dence the most culpable. —That it is
 “ desirable we should grow the whole of
 “ the hemp and flax which we make use of
 “ in every way, I do not mean to assert ;
 “ nor, indeed, that it is either necessary,
 “ or to be wished, that we should give up
 “ the consumption of all the foreign commo-
 “ dities, which we import, except the few
 “ above enumerated as particularly essential
 “ to us. All that I assert, is, that by far
 “ the greater part of what we import, we
 “ could do very well without, and conse-
 “ quently, that in every point of view,
 “ whether considered as sellers or as buyers,
 “ we are independent of commerce.” —
 “ Of turpentine, pitch, and the various de-
 “ nominations of wood, of which we do not
 “ grow enough for the use of our navy (for all
 “ others we could do without), we can al-
 “ ways, at a little additional expence, obtain
 “ an abundance, even from those parts of
 “ America, which are unsettled, or, at any
 “ rate, in those parts, where no power yet

upon the earth would be able to prevent us
 from obtaining them, we having a decided
 superiority of maritime force. We now la-
 zily obtain the greater part of what we con-
 sume of these materials from the continent of
 Europe ; and this is the effect of commerce ;
 but, supposing it possible that a complete
 exclusion should exist for years, in Europe,
 the North of America opens and tenders her
 inexhaustible stores of turpentine, pitch,
 masts, yards, and ship timber of every de-
 scription. So, that here is no difficulty in
 the way of a nation, situated as we are, if
 under wise and courageous rulers. These ma-
 terials would cost more than they now cost ;
 but, what would that be to a nation just
 released from the burthen of supporting the
 East-India commerce, which now draws
 from the land and the labour of England
 millions annually ? As to hemp, where is
 there any difficulty in obtaining it ? The
whole that the nation would want might be
 grown by the year after next. Only apply
 to this purpose the amount of the sinecure
 places and pensions, and you will not only
 have hemp enough for yourselves, but
 enough to supply one half of the world, if
 that were desirable. “ But, the *land* ! how
 can we spare the land ? ” I am not much
 for a talk about *new enclosures*, which, in
 general, are wild schemes ; but, I am well
 satisfied, that, if the already-enclosed-land
 were cultivated here as the land is in Flan-
 ders, we should have enough for wheat and
 for hemp and flax besides, and a great deal
 yet to spare. The reason why it is not so
 well cultivated here, is, that so large a por-
 tion of the population is taken up in manu-
 factures ; these being somewhat diminished,
 as they would be by a cessation of commerce,
 there would be, very soon, a great improve-
 ment in the cultivation of the land. The
 land, in its natural state, bears, generally
 speaking, but little. The first thing neces-
 sary is *labour*. From labour comes an *in-
 crease of produce*. From an increase of pro-
 duce comes, in various ways, *manure*. From
 manure comes an *addition* to the increased
 produce. And so on ; not forgetting, that,
 with the increase of produce, or subsistence,
 men, the hands to labour, do also necessari-
 ly increase. Having, then, an addition to
 our labour ready at hand, we have nothing
 to do but to give it a proper direction. A
 law is not required. Only let hemp and
 flax cease to be imported, and you will soon
 see, that those, who are now employed in
 making cloth and cutlery *to be sent abroad to
 be exchanged for hemp and flax*, will be bu-
 sily engaged in the tillage of the plants from
 which those materials are drawn ; and, that,

valets instead of English labourers; to all such persons the decline of Mr. Nokes's commerce must, I allow, be matter of deep regret.—Now, the doctrine which I am endeavouring to maintain, is, I think, by this illustration, made as clear as noon day. There will be enough to differ from me in opinion, and I shall be ready to convey their arguments to the public; but, I beg leave to request them, before hand, not to state, as *something new*, objections which I have myself anticipated, and endeavoured, at least, to answer; because, if they should do this, I must reject their communications, it being quite preposterous to suppose, that I can waste my time and weary the patience of my readers with a repetition of what I have already advanced. I would further beg of someone of those who may differ from me, to confine himself entirely to what has here been said about Mr. Nokes and the race of Timkins; and, generally, I would beseech those, who may honour me with their thoughts upon this important subject, not to expect to produce conviction in my mind by a display of fine high-sounding phrases about “commercial opulence; emporium of commerce; capital, credit and commerce.” I say, that, I am of opinion, that all these tend to weaken, rather than strengthen our country; tend to produce her subjugation, rather than to preserve her independance; and that, therefore, I see their approaching cessation with pleasure, rather than with sorrow. My reasons for this opinion and for this feeling I have given and shall give; and, if I am answered at all, I will be answered with reasons, and neither with declamatory phrases, nor with appeals to the opinions of others.—We now come to the SECOND OBJECTION, which is, “that, if commerce, that is to say, trade with foreign nations; were put an end to, we should not be able to obtain certain articles, which are of the first necessity, especially such articles as are required in the building and the rigging and the fitting out of ships.”—I shall first, as before, give Mr. Spence's answer to this objection, and then add such remarks as appear to me likely to be useful.—It will be said, that though we might give up some of the luxuries which we import, without great inconvenience, yet, a very large portion of what we import, is absolutely necessary to us, and could not be done without.” This may appear, at first glance, to be the case; but if any one will examine a list of our imports, he will be surprised to find how few of the articles we get from other countries, are necessary even to comfortable and luxu-

rious existence; and of how comparatively small value these are, when compared with the immense amount of what we consume. We could not well do without some of the drugs used for dying and for medicine; we should want olive oil, perhaps, in the preparation of our woollen cloths; saltpetre (if we had not the art of the French chemists, to form it from its principles) for our gunpowder; turpentine, and the various denominations of wood, of which we do not grow enough for ourselves. Of all the rest of our imports, I can see scarcely one, that we might not very well do without, or find fully as valuable succedaneums for, from our own productions. Barilla, Turkey carpets, China ware, silk, fruit of all kinds, grocery of every description, (except perhaps, pepper), bar iron, linen of all kinds, skins of every sort, tar, in fact every thing besides the articles which I have pointed out (which no power on earth could hinder us from obtaining, and of which a few cargoes of broad cloth would annually purchase all we can possibly have occasion for), seem by no means necessary to us. Some may be of opinion, that we could not do without hemp, flax, and tallow, which we import from Russia; but there seems no reason why we might not grow a sufficient quantity of the two former articles for our consumption; and whale oil, of the fishery producing which we have a monopoly, will always abundantly supply us with the means of obtaining light, if our own produce of tallow be insufficient.—With respect to hemp, it is infinitely desirable, that we should raise as much in our own country, as would be sufficient, at least, for the supply of our navy; and probably no mode of effecting this, would be equal to the prohibition of its importation, which would at once create a demand for it, adequate to raise its price to the point, at which land could in this country be profitably devoted to its cultivation. The bounties already allowed for effecting this end, deemed by the legislature so important, are evidently inadequate to its accomplishment, since but little hemp is grown in this kingdom. It might cost five or ten pounds a ton more, if produced at home, than if imported from Russia; but this difference, or twice this difference of price, would be well sacrificed for the sake of our being independent of the world for this article, so essential to the existence of our navy. We are now at peace with Russia, and it

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“ is to be hoped, may long continue so ;
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 “ five acres for a ton of hemp ; so that, sup-
 “ posing we consume 10,000 tons of the
 “ former, and 40,000 tons of the latter,
 “ which is quite as much as we do consume,
 “ it would require only 260,000 acres to be
 “ applied to the cultivation of these articles :
 “ an extent which we can very well spare
 “ out of the twenty-two millions of acres
 “ of waste land which are to be found in
 “ Great Britain. All the hemp, however,
 “ requisite for the independence of the
 “ navy, might be raised from 20,000 acres ;
 “ and if, after the narrow escape we once
 “ had of being excluded for years from
 “ Russia ; and after the possibility which
 “ we have just witnessed, of our being shut
 “ out from all commercial intercourse with
 “ a whole Continent ; if, I say, we do not
 “ take immediate steps for the cultivation of
 “ this most indispensable of all our imports,
 “ to at least this extent, we shall be guilty
 “ of folly the most egregious, of improvi-
 “ dence the most culpable. —That it is
 “ desirable we should grow the whole of
 “ the hemp and flax which we make use of
 “ in every way, I do not mean to assert ;
 “ nor, indeed, that it is either necessary,
 “ or to be wished, that we should give up
 “ the consumption of all the foreign commo-
 “ dities, which we import, except the few
 “ above enumerated as particularly essential
 “ to us. All that I assert, is, that by far
 “ the greater part of what we import, we
 “ could do very well without, and conse-
 “ quently, that in every point of view,
 “ whether considered as sellers or as buyers,
 “ we are independent of commerce.” —
 Of turpentine, pitch, and the various de-
 nominations of wood, of which we do not
 grow enough for the use of our navy (for all
 others we could do without), we can al-
 ways, at a little additional expence, obtain
 an abundance, even from those parts of
 America, which are unsettled, or, at any
 rate, in those parts, where no power yet

upon the earth would be able to prevent us
 from obtaining them, we having a decided
 superiority of maritime force. We now la-
 zily obtain the greater part of what we con-
 sume of these materials from the continent of
 Europe ; and this is the effect of commerce ;
 but, supposing it possible that a complete
 exclusion should exist for years, in Europe,
 the North of America opens and tenders her
 inexhaustible stores of turpentine, pitch,
 masts, yards, and ship timber of every de-
 scription. So, that here is no difficulty in
 the way of a nation, situated as we are, if
 under wise and courageous rulers. These ma-
 terials would cost more than they now cost ;
 but, what would that be to a nation just
 released from the burthen of supporting the
 East-India commerce, which now draws
 from the land and the labour of England
 millions annually ? As to hemp, where is
 there any difficulty in obtaining it ? The
whole that the nation would want might be
 grown by the year after next. Only apply
 to this purpose the amount of the sinecure
 places and pensions, and you will not only
 have hemp enough for yourselves, but
 enough to supply one half of the world, if
 that were desirable. “ But, the *land* ! how
 can we spare the land ? ” I am not much
 for a talk about *new enclosures*, which, in
 general, are wild schemes ; but, I am well
 satisfied, that, if the already-enclosed-land
 were cultivated here as the land is in Flan-
 ders, we should have enough for wheat and
 for hemp and flax besides, and a great deal
 yet to spare. The reason why it is not so
 well cultivated here, is, that so large a por-
 tion of the population is taken up in manu-
 factures ; these being somewhat diminished,
 as they would be by a cessation of commerce,
 there would be, very soon, a great improve-
 ment in the cultivation of the land. The
 land, in its natural state, bears, generally
 speaking, but little. The first thing neces-
 sary is *labour*. From labour comes an *in-
 crease of produce*. From an increase of pro-
 duce comes, in various ways, *manure*. From
 manure comes an *addition* to the increased
 produce. And so on ; not forgetting, that,
 with the increase of produce, or subsistence,
 men, the hands to labour, do also necessari-
 ly increase. Having, then, an addition to
 our labour ready at hand, we have nothing
 to do but to give it a proper direction. A
 law is not required. Only let hemp and
 flax cease to be imported, and you will soon
 see, that those, who are now employed in
 making cloth and cutlery *to be sent abroad to
 be exchanged for hemp and flax*, will be bu-
 sily engaged in the tillage of the plants from
 which those materials are drawn ; and, that,

while the nation will be a great gainer, the only persons who will lose by such a change, will be the great manufacturers for exportation, the merchants trading to Russia, and the Russians themselves, who cannot make cloth or cutlery so well as we can. Thus, then, we should not need those *roads and canals*, “those works of *public utility*,” of which Mr. Spence speaks, as the means of employing the ousted manufacturers; we should not need to raise taxes to pay them for throwing stones at the moon; but, there would, at once open itself to them an employment of real public utility, without the accompanying curse of premium, pension, poor-rate, or job.—Mr. Spence is, indeed, mistaken in supposing, that hemp and flax would grow in our *waste land*. It requires very good land to produce a good crop of either; but, the addition which a check to the export of manufactures would make, either directly or indirectly, to our agricultural labourers, would enable us to bring new lands into tillage, or, rather to restore to tillage the lands *formerly cultivated*, and now lying waste, which, in spite of all our boasted modern improvements, and pretended increased population, consist of millions of acres, as any one may be satisfied, who, like me, has attentively surveyed the wastes of the western counties, Hampshire included, and who has perceived, that the plough formerly went upon the sides and to the very tops of hills, where, now-a-days, nothing ever ventures but grey-hounds and hares. The restored lands would, under good cultivation, bear corn, while some of the lands, now cultivated, would produce hemp and flax; and thus would this difficulty, so terrible to persons enervated both in body and mind by luxury, be speedily surmounted.—And, as to *corn*. Do we not grow enough now? Perhaps not. But, the remedy is the same. Diminish commerce and manufactures, and we have more labour for the land; and that will, I warrant, bring us more corn. We now employ a certain number of men, say a hundred, in making knives and scissars and razors and buttons and locks and keys and candlesticks and watches and kettles and pots and spoons and porringers and the lord knows what, for a certain portion of the people in Prussia or America, and they, in exchange, send us wheat and oats. Put an end to this traffic, by which a couple or three merchants and manufacturers are growing rich, and what is the natural consequence? Why, that our hundred knife makers go, either directly or indirectly, to raising corn here in England, where corn will then be wanted in lieu of that before

brought from Prussia or America in exchange for the hardware which they before manufactured to be sent to one or the other of those countries.—It is not so with *all* countries. America has not wool, nor has Holland, nor have many other parts which we supply with that article of prime necessity; but, England has plenty of, land for the raising of every thing which she really *wants*, and which she gets from abroad, turpentine, pitch and some timber excepted, and these she can obtain in abundance by the sole effect of her maritime power. Rich in mines of Iron, Tin, Lead, Copper, and, above all, *Coals*, with lands three times as extensive as her present population requires, and, at the same time mistress of the sea, and yet she trembles! Trembles for her life, at a custom-house decree, which life she regards as dependent upon that commerce, which has been the great cause of all those internal corruptions, the effect of which has been to besot, enervate, degrade and enslave her.—The THIRD OBJECTION is, that, as the mercantile marine is the nursery of seamen for our ships of war, if commerce cease, the mercantile marine ceasing, of course, along with it, this nursery is destroyed, and, in a short time, though we shall have ships of war, we shall have no sailors.—First, let us hear Mr. Spence’s answer to this objection.—“Every Briton must be of one mind with respect to the infinite importance of every mean by which our naval superiority is kept up; and as there can be no doubt, that our trade *has* been one grand cause of our eminence at sea, we are certainly, therefore, in this point of view, highly indebted to it. But the question we have now under consideration is, whether we are *now* independent of commerce; and, surely, there can be no reason why the superiority of our navy should not be continued, even if all our trade were this instant to cease. It has been shown, that the *wealth* necessary for keeping up either a naval or a military force, is not derived from commerce. We *have* ships, and we *have* sailors. What then should hinder us from increasing the number, both of the one, and the other, as well without, as with commerce? Our shipbuilders will not lose their art, if they are employed in building men of war; and a landsman may be educated into a sailor, as well, surely, on board a seventy-four, as on board a merchant ship. It may be said, “But what becomes of our navy in time of peace; and how is it to be supplied with men on the recurrence of war, without resorting

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“to that nursery of seamen, commerce?”
 “There is no absolute necessity, I reply,
 “that our navy should ever be dismantled,
 “or our seamen ever disbanded. Other na-
 “tions think it necessary, to keep a stand-
 “ing army in time of peace. We, if we
 “were to lose our commerce, might main-
 “tain a *standing navy*; and a fertile ima-
 “gination may easily conceive and point
 “out, abundance of important and rational
 “occupations for such a fleet, even when
 “not engaged in war. It may indeed ad-
 “mit of doubt, whether it would not be
 “politic for this nation, even if she had
 “more extended commerce than she has,
 “constantly to maintain a fleet in time of
 “peace; and, in fact, it would be madness
 “in the present state of Europe, not to do so.
 “Let it be considered also, that we shall, at all
 “events retain our *coasting trade*, and that
 “this trade is of as much importance,
 “as all our other branches of commerce
 “collectively, as a nursery for seamen.”

—To hear some people talk about the ne-
 cessity of commerce in order to create sai-
 lers for our ships of war, one would almost
 imagine, that they regarded merchant ships
 as the females, or breeding ships, of our
 navy. Sailors, if they enter grown men,
 may as well enter at once, as thousands
 of them do, into ships of war, where they
 will learn their business much sooner and
 better than on board of merchant ships;
 and, why boys should not be taught on
 board of men of war, as well as on board
 of merchant ships, I should be glad to
 know the reason. “But, on board the
 “merchant ships, they are always at hand,
 “in cases of emergency.” This would im-
 ply, that merchant ships are *always in port*.
 Some of them are; but there is a much
 greater number that are not; and, of course,
 all the seamen, on board of them, are not
 at hand in cases of emergency. There is
 one thing, however, which seems to be
 completely forgotten by all those who raise
 the objection which I am here combating,
 namely, that a very considerable portion of
 our ships of war, and, of course, our sea-
 men, are, during every war employed, not
 in defending the country or in assailing the
 enemy, but in *defending commerce*. Nay, I
 believe, that, at this moment more than
 one half of our astonishing maritime force
 is employed in objects, which, well exa-
 mined into, will clearly appear to be purely
 commercial; and, we have proved, over
 and over again, that commerce adds no-
 thing, does in nowise contribute to the
 real wealth or power of the nation. Com-
 merce a *nursery*, indeed, of British seamen!

Go, examine the dismal returns from our
 ships stationed in the East or West Indies,
 and you will say, that commerce is their
grave. It is on board of our coasting ves-
 sels; the vessels which carry things from
 one part of these islands to the other; it is
 on board of our vessels kept at *home*, that
 seamen are raised. This has always been
 the nursery for British seamen, and from
 this nursery the graves of foreign climates
 are fed, and that, too, owing exclusively
 to commerce. These vessels unlike those
 employed in foreign commerce, are *always*
 within reach of our ships of war; their
 crews are ready upon *every* emergency; and,
 from the nature of the trade in which they
 are engaged, they are readily replenished
 with hands.—From this view of the mat-
 ter, it is evident, I think, that the dread of
 losing our sailors with our foreign commerce
 is a mere bugbear, and, like all the other
 subjects of alarm, which we have noticed
 in the course of these observations, has
 arisen from the erroneous notions respecting
 the importance of commerce, so long and so
 industriously inculcated from the press, the
 bench, the senate, the pulpit, and the throne.
 —“And *who are you*,” as the Attorney
 General, now Chancellor of the Exchequer,
 said of me, in *Latin*, when he was plead-
 ing against me, in the Court of King’s
 Bench; “*Who are you*, that presumes to
 “tell us we are all in error?” Why, what
 signifies it who I am? The only question is,
am I right? If I am not, upset my argu-
 ments, and shew the world that I am wrong.
 Neither your *Latin* nor your gown nor your
 wig will weigh aught against these argu-
 ments, any more than against the decrees
 or the sword of Buonaparté.—I can easi-
 ly excuse an erroneous way of thinking,
 upon subjects connected with commerce,
 seeing that, for a long time, I regarded
 commerce as the life-blood of the nation.
 The state of things has made me reflect; it
 has set me to thinking upon the cause of
 my country’s danger and the means of her
 salvation; and the result of that reflection,
 as far as relates to commerce, is that it is
 injurious in place of being, as is generally
 thought, beneficial to the country.—View-
 ing commerce in this light, with what in-
 difference might we behold the attempts of
 Buonaparté to ruin us, by such means as he
 is adopting, and as our wise ministers are
 working, tooth and nail to *counteract*! There
 are several countries, under the controul of
 France, which are dependent upon com-
 merce for their means of subsistence. It
 was, therefore, very right to put a stop to
 their commerce; but, even that should have

been done in another manner. The *dominion of the seas* should have been explicitly asserted; and, the vessels stopped, or brought in, should have been made to pay a *tribute*. The effect upon commerce would have been the same, but the effect upon the minds of mankind would have been very different. What have we now done? We have gone solely upon a principle of *retaliation*; we have said, you have injured our commerce, and we will injure yours; we have acted under the evident hope of being able to give new life to our declining commerce; we have, in short, proclaimed to the whole world, that we sorely feel the effects of the conqueror's edicts, and that we are making a desperate attempt to obtain vengeance.—The London prints seem to be almost ready to cry, when they give us an account of the “*severe and cruel decrees*” of Napoleon against our commerce and merchants. As to the merchants that may fall into his clutches, I shall be sorry to hear of their suffering, in any way; but, it should always be recollected, that they went abroad for their own interest's sake; that they were in pursuit of no public benefit; and that they will reap only the fruit of their adventuring, which *might* have turned out very much to their advantage.—“The correspondence of England with every part of the Continent is intercepted, we have, in consequence of the blockade, in our hands, more than an hundred thousand English letters and bills of exchange to the amount of several millions sterling. These measures must reduce the English to a desperate situation.”—This is the language of the last received French official print, the *Moniteur*, whose editor appears not to yield, in point of profundity, to any of the sages, by whom the people of England are taught and ruled. But, if Mr. Spence's and my doctrine be sound, instead of joining the London prints in crying at this news, may not the public well laugh at it; as I do at this moment? What are the letters and bills of exchange to us? To the nation, I mean? One half of the bills of exchange are, I dare say, payable in London; and, it must certainly “reduce us to a desperate situation,” if the said bills should not arrive! This interruption to commerce will, no doubt, reduce many *individuals* to a desperate situation; but, what is that to the nation? Suppose it to *ruin*, in the common acceptance of that word, a hundred thousand persons, there will be, in the kingdom, fifteen millions as well off as they were before. But, when we talk of effects, of all sorts, we are apt to exaggerate greatly. Thus, a di-

minution of wealth is often called ruin; and, indeed, an obstruction to the further accumulation of wealth is frequently designated by that desponding term. If Mr. Nokes, for instance, be, all at once, reduced from ten thousand a year income to the one or two hundred a year, which his goods and chattels will yield him, we call him a *ruined man*; though, for my part, I see nothing that he wants to make him happy, and to bring up his family. To be sure, he cannot keep his boxes at the opera and the play-houses; he cannot purchase tickets to hear the squalling and squeaking and piping of the Italian singers; he can no longer keep French cooks and Swiss valets; he must cease to drink wine, and his wife and daughters must cease to wear velvet and silk and jewels and spangles and ostrich feathers and paste and paint; and, so much the better. His reduced income, *aided by industry*, will furnish him and his family with plenty of food and raiment, while the nine thousand eight hundred pounds a year, which he has ceased to receive, will, in all probability, be scattered about in such a way as to cause a proportionate decrease in the demand for Italian singers, French cooks, Swiss valets, and paint and paste for the face, arms, neck and shoulders. The singers and such people would, doubtless, suffer from the change here contemplated; but, I think, it is clear, that nobody else would; and that, as to the nation suffering from it, the fact is, evidently, the reverse. May we not, then, laugh at the predictions of the *Moniteur*, if we are convinced that our government is in the hands of wise and incorrupt men? Aye, let this be as it may, we ought to laugh heartily; for, out of the present state of things, good, in one way or another must come.—Now, I am well aware, that I shall, for a while, make but few converts. The doctrine I preach is so contrary to the settled opinions of the nation, generally speaking; it is so hostile to the feelings of numerous persons; it includes such a fearful fall of those who have, in fact, ruled the nation for so many years; that I am satisfied, that, comparatively speaking, few people will, at first, listen to me. But, I am equally well satisfied, that it only requires time, and not a very long time, to work a general conversion, especially if the joint endeavours of Buonaparté and our ministry should effect the destruction of any considerable part of our commerce. We shall then have the proof, the experimental proof, that all our alarms, upon this score, were groundless. We shall find, that, upon a general scale

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(and that is the way to estimate), the loss of commerce will produce no diminution of our public resources, no diminution of the comforts of the people; while, on the other hand, it must break up those combinations, which have been, and are, the most convenient instruments of corruption. We have a convincing proof, that the loss of commerce has not weakened France. Why are we, then, to suppose, that it will expose us to subjugation? Let the *Moniteur* answer this question. In short, we have, within ourselves, every thing necessary to our comfort and our defence, and, if we do not make use of the means, which a bountiful Providence has placed in our hands, we shall, and we ought to, perish as a nation.

AUSTRIA, SPAIN, AND PORTUGAL.—

The first of these countries has, we are told, declared war against us, which is much about of as much consequence to us as a similar declaration on the part of one of the Emperors of Otaheité would be; and of far less consequence than the growth of a single bushel of wheat or barley. Nay, it is, in one respect, a good; because it will put an end, for the present, at least, to our embassy in Austria; and, I suppose, the expense of maintaining it at home, by pensions and allowances, will not be quite so great as the maintaining of it there; though, observe, I do not take upon me to state this as a fact ascertained.—As to the affair in Spain, where the royal father accuses the royal son of a conspiracy against his life, that is to say, of meditated parricide, there are, it appears, from the London papers, two opinions. Some persons suppose, that the king has hatched this accusation against his son; others, that the charge is well founded. I cannot, of course, pretend to say which of these opinions is correct; but, of one thing I am quite certain, and that is, that either the father or the son, is an atrocious scoundrel, however often the one may have been called the best of kings, and the other, the illustrious heir apparent. The London newspapers, particularly the *Courier*, ascribes the conduct of the king (whom they accuse of hatching the accusation) to the machinations of the “giant fiend,” which description I, as a matter of course, looked upon as applicable to the devil, whose giant stature is described by Milton; but, behold, who should it be but Buonaparté! “Little Boney,” as the mob call him, is now become, all at once, a “giant fiend!” There is, however, this to be said, that it is a king; yea, a royal personage, whom he has seduced; and, I do hope, that the devil himself is not able

to seduce many, even amongst the villains of the earth, to lay a plot, for taking away the life of their own child.—The *Courier* represents the *Queen*, too, as an accomplice in this abominable design upon the son's life and that, too, at the instigation of the Prince of Peace, who, this writer insinuates, is a lover of her Majesty. Good lord! What shall we hear next? Why, he will really make us doubt, whether it be not high time that this Spanish royal race were succeeded by some other race; for, if what he says be true, I think it is quite impossible that the poor Spaniards should experience a change for the worse. He tells us, that the king's *intellects are weak*; or, in other words, that he is a fool. Fool as he is, he *reigns*, it seems; and therefore, in no just mind, can his folly be urged as an apology for the crime he is accused of by this writer. Besides, there is always some difficulty in conducting a plot with a fool. Indeed, his Most Catholic Majesty appears to have displayed no small degree of cunning upon this occasion, which cunning, though we often meet with it in confirmed fools, ought to plead against any apology that may be set up for his conduct; because, as I observed before, he *reigns*, and a man that reigns ought not to be a fool. The happiness and honour of millions ought not to be committed to the guardianship of a gabbling slobbering creature, fit only for the cell of a mad-house, though he may, at times, discover a greater degree of low cunning than even the oldest intriguer in his dominions. This apology, therefore, for his Most Catholic Majesty, will answer no good purpose. It does indeed, tend to aggravate the charge against him; and, it must reconcile the world to any change that may take place in Spain; for, what, Good God! can be more disgraceful to a nation; what can more sorely gall men of sense and of spirit, than the reflection, that their chief ruler, the person whom they are obliged to acknowledge as their sovereign, is a notorious idiot!—In Portugal affairs seem to be fast approaching to a crisis. The Prince Regent is, the *Moniteur* says (and upon such matters, it is pretty good authority), to lose his throne. “*The Prince Regent loses his throne.*” Just in so many words, and no more. And it is very likely, that this is the sole channel, through which the Prince will receive any previous intimation of his fate. I think it probable, that Napoleon, now that he is bending his thoughts towards the South-West, is likely to give Spain the finishing stroke, too; and then, as to all this side of the continent, the work will

be done. In the South, and South East, and to the North, there is, yet, a good deal to do; but, the work-man, though no Latin Scholar, is a man of some dispatch. It has been suggested to me, by a very valuable correspondent, that we might arrest the progress of this "giant fiend" by opposing *Lord Wellesley* to him. I have heard of a French woman, who says, "il n'y a que deux grands hommes dans le monde: Buonaparte et milor Wellesley." I am somewhat of the opinion of this French woman; but, I mean, as I presume she does, not to pit these great men against each other with the same sort of weapons. Buonaparte with a sword, and our little Cæsar with a pen; and, if the latter was but put in Mr. Canning's place, and we could but prevail upon Buonaparte to read his dispatches, nay, or only *one half* of them, he would never make conquest again; for, we would, every other day, at least, treat him with an epistle, which, if not quite so efficacious in the work of conversion, should be as long as all the epistles of all the Apostles put together.

Botley, 27th Nov. 1807.

IRISH TITHES.

Sir;—It appears by your reasoning in your Register of the 14th instant, on the subject of a commutation for Tithes in Ireland, that you are an enemy to such a proposition, and would still saddle the land with the expence of maintaining a clergy of one sort or the other. And you say "in proportion to the Catholic population, I would have diverted that expence to their ministers, making the Protestant Church a compensation in England, by purchasing up the lay impropriations, upon the unalterable condition, that Benefice and Residence should in all cases, be inseparable. I had no intention to cheat both the clergy and the laity, and call it patriotism."—I have always entertained so high an opinion of your judgement and good sense, that I differ from you with much diffidence, but as my sentiments are so much at variance with yours, after perusing what you have said with all the attention in my power, I am inclined to believe that you have not considered this great question in all its bearings with your usual discrimination, as your reasoning on most subjects has wrought conviction on my mind. As few men are so capable as yourself and this question being of the highest interest, I am sure that your readers will be under great obligations to you to favor them with your matured sentiments upon it, and none

I assure you, will feel the obligation more strongly than myself. Being unacquainted with the system in Ireland my remarks must be confined to that of England, and having always understood that in Ireland this grievance is the most oppressive, every observation must apply with additional force. I am fully convinced that the landowner would be materially benefitted if tithes were abolished, as in that case the occupier of land could certainly afford to pay in additional rent, what he now pays in tithes, and I have no doubt would be required to do so; but in the instance of a commutation (which supposes the same payment by a different mode) I confess it does not appear to me that the landlord can be a gainer. You seem of opinion that if the occupier of land does not pay less to the parson as a composition, than he now does, that he can derive no substantial benefits from the proposed change. It is the general practice in this country to lease lands for considerable terms, at certain rents, the tithes are also in many instances leased, but I believe in most they are not, and under the most favorable circumstances such lease must depend on the life of the incumbent, which from its uncertainty must in a multitude of instances turn to the disadvantage of the occupier, for no sooner does a change take place, than the new rector has recourse to a valuation of the tithes, and generally they are either raised or taken in kind; in the former case, the occupier must be in a worse situation than if the landlord had leased him the whole, as would have been the case had tithes no existence; and in the latter a most grievous oppression would be exercised by taking a tenth of the produce from land, got into a high state of cultivation at great expence and by many years exertion. Under these circumstances the Farmer would be deprived of much more than he ought in justice to pay, by a subtraction of a tenth of the produce thus acquired; or by a different course of husbandry, which would certainly be injurious to himself, he would considerably lessen the advantages that the community would otherwise receive. And this to spite the Parson.—You are too good a judge of human nature to doubt that this must happen, or not to know that these circumstances must continually occur.—With regard to your observation of apportioning the tithes between the clergy of different religions in proportion to the population, every enlightened mind must coincide with you in so liberal a sentiment, and I must decidedly agree with you that Benefice and Residence should be inseparable, unless in

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extreme cases, when half the profits of the living should belong to the curate, who *should reside*.—But to me your proposition of applying the tithes of England to the payment of the resident clergy in Ireland would be extremely objectionable. Suppose a Farmer seeing his tithes taken in kind, and the profits sent to a clergyman in Ireland, whom he had never seen and for whom he could entertain nothing but detestation. What would you say to that Mr. Cobbett, or what would the people of England think of such a measure?—You also say you would still have saddled the land with the expence of maintaining the clergy. My understanding is certainly not sufficient to discern the rule of equity by which you would burthen any particular description of persons with the whole charge of maintaining a clergy, when all classes of the community are equally interested in, and benefitted by such an establishment. I do not see why a tenth part of the produce, or a fifth part of the rent of my little farm (which is what tithes are usually let at) should be taken towards the support of an establishment, when the rich merchant, the overgrown Fundholder, or the man whose fortune is on bond or mortgage to ever so great an amount, are exempted from any charge whatever, though equally interested with me. I do not see the justice of all this, and I am sure you sir do not recommend it on the score of its having so long existed. Indeed formerly, according to Burn's ecclesiastical law, personal tithes, or a tenth part of the *clear gain* arising from the *honest* industry of men, was payable, which probably was discontinued on account of the difficulty of ascertaining its amount; however, be that as it may, there does not seem any good reason why the land alone should bear the whole burthen. I conceive the church establishment is intended as a *general* benefit, and that its real object is, or ought to be, the improvement of the morals of *society at large*, and therefore as *all are interested*, that mode of payment which falls the *most equal on all classes*, and is the least *irritating* to the feelings of *any*, should seem the best that could be adopted. If this idea is correct, it would be difficult to devise a mode more objectionable than the present one, or one more ruinous to agricultural improvements, or more destructive to religion, it being a source of endless vexation and discord; and to such a degree is it carried in several parishes which I know, as to cause a great part of the inhabitants to refrain from going to church.—Would it not be highly beneficial to the interests of religion, and infinitely

more equitable, if Parliament were to dispose of the tithes, and the clergy were to be paid in annuities; every individual would then contribute to their support, there being but few, who do not pay taxes to the state.—To some this mode would be objectionable from the tendency it appears to have in throwing the influence of the clergy into the hands of government, and to others it being a fixed money payment, the depreciation of money might make it very injurious.—Perhaps the presentations remaining in the same persons might obviate the first objection, and the second might be easily remedied by a rise in the annuities at stated periods (if found by parliament to be necessary,) equal to the depreciation of money.—Having been an eye witness to a multitude of ills from the present partial and oppressive manner of providing for the clergy, and fully believing that it not only has an injurious tendency to the country, by cramping agricultural improvements in a variety of ways, but that it is also essentially injurious to the best interests of religion, I cannot help thinking, that the statesman who has virtue and resolution enough to undertake so great a good, as the commutation of tithes, will be entitled to be ranked amongst the most distinguished patriots of any clime or any age—With much respect, I am Sir, &c. A LAND-OWNER.
November 21.

COMMERCE.

SIR;—I have perused Mr. Spence's arguments, as given in the last and preceding Register, together with your extracts; and, though I agree with you, Mr. Cobbett, that that gentleman cannot claim the praise of originality, either in his ideas, or in the printing of them; yet, I am free to say, that the public is much indebted to him for the clear, logical precision with which they are discussed in his publication. Admiring the positions laid down by yourself and Mr. Spence regarding commerce, and feeling as I do that the existence of this country as an *independent nation**, is by *no means* endangered by the *suspension* of our foreign commerce, and persuaded too, that a *temporary* suspension will be of peculiar advantage to the country, because it will engrave on the hearts of Englishmen, the solemn, serious, and important TRUTH, that British independence and foreign commerce have by no means a reciprocal relation; yet, I confess, I cannot attain to the conclusion, that a *permanent* suspension of foreign commerce

* By independence, I mean, her safety from foreign conquest,

would be productive of any serious advantage to Great Britain. You must not imagine, Mr. Cobbett, that I am going to start difficulties or doubts for the mere purpose of opposition, I am only disposed to state such grounds as appear to me at present objectionable to the PERMANENT ANNIHILATION of foreign commerce, in order, Sir, that you, who have much more deeply considered the subject in all its various bearings than myself, may remove these with the other objections which you have promised to notice. Mr. Spence states the population of Great Britain at *twelve* millions; and, he says, that in the supplying food for these twelve millions, not more than *two* millions are employed; and that the remaining *ten* millions may be engaged in fabricating manufactures of use or of luxury; in defending the state; in communicating religious, moral, or scientific instruction; and in other ways which he has mentioned. Now, Sir, I apprehend, that for communicating religious and *moral* instruction, and for the administration of justice, (I do not mean to speak with levity upon these subjects) we employ as many gentlemen as the interest or welfare of the state requires; but it seems, that notwithstanding our supply in these particular branches, which are the whole, I believe, wherein literary talents can be employed, we have yet sufficient of the ten millions of population left, to manufacture clothes, hardware, and pottery for the WHOLE inhabitants of AMERICA, besides a thousand other articles of the most pressing necessity, and of the greatest durability, and that all these are manufactured after *we ourselves* have been first supplied with every thing that is essential to our comfort and happiness. Now, Mr. Cobbett, I find this difficulty in the annihilation of commerce;—if we have no foreign connection to relieve us from these surplus manufactures, who is to become the purchaser of them? For we, it must be observed, are *already* supplied with these articles. Why, if it be extremely material to get rid of them, throw them into the sea! But throwing them into the sea will not retribute the manufacturer for his labour in producing the manufactures, or for the purchase of the raw materials with which they have been made: the result then is this; if there be an end of the exportation of these manufactures, that *portion* of the ten millions of population which has been employed in producing them, must be divested of all employ; all means of supporting themselves by their labour; unless you can substitute in their place other manufactures, which will be exhausted by home-

consumption. Can such manufactures be pointed out? I admit all this time, that the internal riches of the country are as affluent as if the exportation had continued; but, is it no serious ground of objection, that a large mass of the people is to be out of employ; that *four or five millions* probably are to be added to the present lamentable list of mendicants, who disgrace our cities, and corrupt our prisons. I know that though the whole ten millions were paupers, there will be wealth enough to support them, because the same wealth that supported them before still continues in the country; but are the *features* of the country not materially defaced, when a considerable mass of population, which before claimed respect from its comparative independence, is reduced to solicit *charity* for mere subsistence. I can perceive, Mr. Cobbett, that luxury may be carried too far. The confines of virtues do not easily admit of their respective lines of demarcation being traced with mathematical precision; but that is no proof that *luxury*, as well as virtue, has not a *necessary existence*. Luxury in great states seems an inevitable consequence; and the only question is, whether in attempting to *limit* her powers *considerably*, we do not place ourselves in opposition to nature's laws; and if we do, we may be sure we shall be lamentably disappointed in the consequences. When I view Great Britain consisting of *twelve millions* of inhabitants, and find from Mr. Spence that *only two millions* are required to labour to supply the whole with food; If man be (what he is unquestionably) born to labour and to support himself by the result of that labour, reason imprints on my forehead in characters as strong as any that were written on the twelve tables, that luxury, whether a vice or a virtue, is an indispensable law: if it be a law, though we may be cautious not to enlarge its powers, it must nevertheless be revered. When the FEUDAL SYSTEM predominated in this country, commerce was but little known; that may probably have been the cause and basis of feudal tyranny. The population was considerable, and a small proportion could supply the whole with food; another small proportion could supply the other limited wants of an unenlightened people; the persons so employed gave to the feudal Baron an equivalent for the food which fed them; the rest were necessarily *dependant* upon him for support; and what are DEPENDANTS, Sir, of any kind but SLAVES? When commerce introduced luxury, and the appetite of insatiable man became vitiated with foreign dainties, those masses of population which

before were absolutely dependant, found the means of employing themselves to advantage; they manufactured, not for their own countrymen—they were already supplied—but for those foreigners, who in exchange gave them the fopperies of nature and of art; and with these they supplied the liege lord with an *equivalent* for that food, which before they supplicated from his bounty. But here an important æra burst from the gloom of slavery, and with a talismanic power, dissolved the enchantment of *dependence*, and raised to human admiration and astonishment the bright CHARM of CIVIL LIBERTY. My question is, Mr. Cobbett, “do we not, by annihilating commerce, retrace the steps which brought us from feudal tyranny?” I shall be happy, Mr. Cobbett, to see a convincing negative given to my question. Commerce and myself are by no means cordial friends. Commercial corporations have been always regarded by me with a cautious jealousy: the sanguinary effects of one, at least, is not to be obliterated from my mind, or from the mind of any man that is tinctured with the faintest colouring of humanity. I am not of an age, Sir, to have heard the speeches of Mr. Burke on Indian delinquency, but I have read them; and when I did read them, it appeared as if an angel of light were opening the ponderous gates of the damned, to exhibit to my view all the exquisitely depraved torments of the arch fiend, with the miserable wrecks of victims on whom they had been exercised. I am, indeed, no advocate for Indian domination; but I should be happy to have my mind set at rest on the question of foreign commerce.—I am, &c.
—W. F. S.—*Lincoln's Inn, Nov. 23, 1807.*

FOREIGN OFFICIAL PAPERS.

BRITISH COMMERCE—*Official Letter from the French Consul at Bremen, to his Excellency the Burgomaster, President of the Senate of that City.—Dated Bremen, October 26, 1807.*

Sir,—I hasten to inform you, that it is the intention of his Majesty the Emperor and King, that all navigation on the Weser be prohibited; it is his Majesty's desire that all vessels, even French, entering the Weser, be stopped, provided they are wholly or partly laden with colonial produce, or any other goods of whatever kind, that England can furnish. The goods are to be put under sequestration, and taken in charge until farther orders.—Vessels loaded solely with merchandize, which it is possible England cannot furnish, such as pitch, tar, iron, copper, and French wines, are to be ex-

empted from seizure; and all vessels are to be prevented from leaving the Weser.—I am finally ordered to take the most efficacious measures that the intentions of his Majesty be strictly and immediately fulfilled. I hasten to warn you thereof, that you may immediately inform the merchants of this city, in order that they may avoid the inevitable loss to which they will be exposed, if they attempt to render ineffectual the measures taken for the rigid and prompt execution of the orders of my sovereign.—I am, &c. LAGAU.

SPAIN.—*Decree issued by the King of Spain from the Palace of San Lorenzo, and addressed to the Governor of the Council ad interim. Oct. 30th 1807.*

C. R.—God, who watches over his creatures, does not permit the consummation of atrocious deeds, when the intended victims are innocent.—Thus his omnipotence has saved me from the most unheard of catastrophe.—My people, my subjects, all know my Christianity and settled habits. They all love me, and I receive from all of them proofs of their veneration—such as the conduct of a parent calls for from his children.—I lived persuaded of this felicity, and devoted to the repose of my family, when an unknown hand discovered the most atrocious and unheard of conspiracy, which was carried on in my own Palace, against my person.—My life, which has so often been in danger, was too long, in the eyes of my successor, who, infatuated by prejudice, and alienated from every principle of christianity that my paternal care and love had taught him, had entered into a project to dethrone me. Informed of this, I thought proper to inquire personally into the truth of the fact, and surprising him in my room, I found in his possession the cypher of his correspondence, and of the instructions he had received from the vile conspirators.—In consequence of this discovery, I immediately convoked the Governor and Council, in order that they might make the necessary inquiries; and the result has been the detection of several malefactors, whose imprisonment I have ordered; as also the arrest of my son at his residence. This is an additional aggravation of the affliction I labour under; but however painful to my feelings, it must be submitted to, as it is of the utmost importance to the suppression of such a conspiracy. At the same time that I direct the publication of this affair to my subjects, I cannot avoid expressing to them the regret by which I am agitated; but that regret will be alleviated by the demonstrations of their

loyalty. You will take the proper measures to have this Decree circulated in due form. —CHARLES R.—By command of His Majesty, I transmit this Decree to your Excellency, in order that it may be duly promulgated. Signed by the Ministers, and addressed to all Viceroys, &c. &c.

AMERICAN COMMERCE.—*Copy of the Circular Letter addressed by the Consul of the United States, at Hamburgh, to the Masters of American Ships, bound to that Port: dated Hamburgh, Nov. 4, 1807.*

At the request of the merchants here, dealing with the United States, I have issued the annexed Circular Instructions to the masters of such of our ships as may be bound to this city, and have also sent over to Heligoland an agent, who will remain there for some months, in order to communicate such further information as I find it expedient to convey to our countrymen passing that island. You, Sir, will make such use of these circumstances as the interest of our commerce may point out to your known zeal and discretion.—I am, J. M. Forbes. W. Lyman, Esq. consul of the United States of America, &c. London.

To Masters of American Ships bound to Hamburgh.

In the present unprecedented crisis, such great and almost daily changes take place, and the measures of the belligerents, affecting commerce, are put into such immediate operation, that it is impossible for the most prudent, with the best intentions, to avoid the injuries which, on every side, lay in wait for fair neutral trade.—It is, therefore, by no means my intention to assume any controul in the destination of your ships, but merely to state such facts as it is important you should know. In this measure my own opinion has been fortified by those of the most respectable merchants here in connection with my country, expressed to me in their written request.—The French Custom-house Officers, or Douaniers, without any official intimation to the Foreign Agents here, have, some time since, in virtue of an Imperial Decree, applied the commercial regulations and laws of France to the trade of this city, and without any exceptions, require certificates of origin, signed by the French Consul at the place of shipment, for all articles attempted to be introduced here. In addition to the inconveniences which the prompt and unexpected execution of this measure presented, within a few days, a new order of the French Emperor has interdicted, in the most rigid manner, the navigation of the Elbe and Weser, to all ships,

whether going or coming; and in consequence of it the American ship Julius Henry, coming from Baltimore, has been seized, the cargo has been sequestered, the ship has been liberated, but without any freight, and must remain under an embargo, of which the term cannot be foreseen. Under this state of things, it must occur to every one, that it cannot promote the interests confided to you, to enter either of these rivers. Having stated thus much, I can only leave you to follow the dictates of your own prudence, assuring you, that I shall endeavour to send you new advices by the first of December, or sooner, if any favourable change takes place.—J. M. FORBES, Consul of the United States of America.

List of Articles permitted to be imported into Hamburgh, with Certificate of Origin, signed by the French Consul, at the place of Shipment:

Timber, masts, iron, copper, hemp, sail-cloth, or ravens-duck, flax, cordage, pitch, tar, wheat, rye, barley, oats, oatmeal, pease, beans, rice, flower, cheese, butter, wine, brandy, tallow, candles, salt, potash, flax-seed, madder, turnip-seed, linseed oil, hemp-oil, whale and other fish oils, fish-glue, mats, horse-hair, hogs'-bristles, saltpetre, yellow-wax, bed feathers, caviar, and honey. All other articles are, for the present, totally prohibited.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPERS.

BLOCKADE.—*Order of Council. From the Supplement to the London Gazette; dated Monday, November 16, 1807.—At the Court at the Queen's Palace, the 11th of November, 1807; Present, the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council. Concluded from p. 832.*

And whereas countries, not engaged in the war, have acquiesced in these orders of France, prohibiting all trade in any articles the produce or manufacture of His Majesty's dominions; and the merchants of those countries have given countenance and effect to those prohibitions, by accepting from persons styling themselves commercial agents of the enemy, resident at neutral ports, certain documents, termed "certificates of origin," being certificates obtained at the ports of shipment, declaring that the articles of the cargo are not of the produce or manufacture of His Majesty's dominions, or to that effect:—And whereas this expedient has been directed by France, and submitted to by such merchants, as part of the new system of warfare directed against the trade of this kingdom, and as the most effectual instrument of accomplishing the same, and

it is therefore essentially necessary to resist it: His Majesty is therefore pleased, by and with the advice of his privy-council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that if any vessel, after reasonable time shall have been afforded for receiving notice of this His Majesty's order at the port or place from which such vessel shall have cleared out, shall be found carrying any such certificate or document as aforesaid, or any document referring to; or authenticating the same, such vessel shall be adjudged lawful prize to the captor, together with the goods laden therein, belonging to the person or persons by whom, or on whose behalf, any such document was put on board.—And the right hon. the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and the Judges of the High Court of Admiralty and Courts of Vice-Admiralty, are to take the necessary measures herein, as to them shall respectively appertain.—W. FAWKENER.

At the Court at the Queen's Palace, the 11th of November, 1807, present, the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

Whereas articles of the growth and manufacture of foreign countries cannot by law be imported into this country, except in British ships, or in ships belonging to the countries of which such articles are the growth and manufacture, without an order in council, specially authorising the same:—His Majesty, taking into consideration the order of this day's date, respecting the trade to be carried on to and from the ports of the enemy, and deeming it expedient that any vessel belonging to any country in alliance, or at amity with His Majesty, may be permitted to import into this country articles of the produce or manufacture of countries at war with His Majesty:—His Majesty, by and with the advice of his privy-council, is therefore pleased to order, and it is hereby ordered, that all goods, wares, or merchandizes, specified and included in the schedule of an act, passed in the 43 year of His present Majesty's reign, intituled, "An Act to repeal the Duties of Customs payable in Great Britain, and to grant other duties in lieu thereof," may be imported from any port or place belonging to any state not at amity with His Majesty, in ships belonging to any state at amity with His Majesty, subject to the payment of such duties, and liable to such drawbacks, as are now established by law upon the importation of the said goods, wares, or merchandize, in ships navigated according to law;

and with respect to such of the said goods, wares, or merchandize, as are authorised to be warehoused under the provisions of an act, passed in the 43d year of his present Majesty's reign, intituled, "An Act for permitting certain goods imported into Great Britain, to be secured in warehouses, without payment of duty," subject to all the regulations of the said last-mentioned act; and with respect to all articles which are prohibited by law from being imported into this country, it is ordered, that the same shall be reported for exportation to any country in amity or alliance with His Majesty.—And His Majesty is further pleased, by and with the advice of his privy-council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that all vessels which shall arrive at any port of the United Kingdom, or at the port of Gibraltar or Malta, in consequence of having been warned pursuant to the aforesaid order, or in consequence of receiving information, in any other manner, of the said order, subsequent to their having taken on board any part of their cargoes, whether previous or subsequent to their sailing, shall be permitted to report their cargoes for exportation, and shall be allowed to proceed upon their voyages to their original ports of destination, (if not unlawful before the issuing of the said order), or to any port at amity with His Majesty, upon receiving a certificate from the collector or comptroller of the customs at the port at which they shall so enter, (which certificate the said collectors and comptrollers of the customs are hereby authorised and required to give,) setting forth that such vessels came into such port in consequence of being so warned, or of receiving such information as aforesaid; and that they were permitted to sail from such port under the regulations which His Majesty has been pleased to establish in respect to such vessels. But in case any vessel so arriving shall prefer to import her cargo, then such vessel shall be allowed to enter and import the same, upon such terms and conditions as the said cargo might have been imported upon, according to law, in case the said vessel had sailed after having received notice of the said order, and in conformity thereto.—And it is further ordered, that all vessels which shall arrive at any port of the United Kingdom, or at Gibraltar or Malta, in conformity and obedience to the said order, shall be allowed, in respect to all articles which may be on board the same, except sugar, coffee, wine, brandy, snuff, and tobacco, to clear out to any port whatever, to be specified in such clearance; and, with respect to the last-mentioned articles,

to export the same to such ports, and under such conditions and regulations only, as His Majesty, by any license to be granted for that purpose, may direct.—And the right hon. the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and the Judges of the High Court of Admiralty and Courts of Vice-Admiralty, are to take the necessary measures herein as to them shall respectively appertain.—W. FAWKENER.

At the Court at the Queen's Palace, the 11th of November, 1807, present, the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

Whereas the sale of ships by a belligerent to a neutral is considered by France to be illegal—And whereas, a great part of the shipping of France and her allies has been protected from capture, during the present hostilities, by transfers, or pretended transfers, to neutrals—And whereas, it is fully justifiable to adopt the same rule, in this respect, towards the enemy, which is applied by the enemy to this country—His Majesty is pleased, by and with the advice of his privy-council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that in future the sale to a neutral of any vessel belonging to His Majesty's enemies, shall not be deemed to be legal, nor in any manner to transfer the property, nor to alter the character of such vessel: and all vessels now belonging, or which shall hereafter belong, to any enemy of His Majesty notwithstanding any sale, or pretended sale, to a neutral, after a reasonable time shall have elapsed for receiving information of this His Majesty's order at the place where such sale, or pretended sale, was effected, shall be captured and brought in, and shall be adjudged as lawful prize to the captors.—And the right hon. the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and the Judges of the High Court of Admiralty and Courts of Vice-Admiralty, are to take the necessary measures herein as to them shall respectively appertain.—W. FAWKENER.

Explanation of the above Order in Council.—dated City of London Tavern, Saturday, Nov. 21, 1807.

A Special Meeting of the Committee of American Merchants, was held here this day, PHILIP SANSON, Esq. in the Chair, when the Chairman made the following Report from the Sub-Committee appointed to attend the Board of Trade on the Subject of the recent Orders in Council.—1. That

American vessels cannot sail in any instance direct from the ports of the United States to any port of the Enemy, in Europe.—2. American vessels may proceed from the ports of the United States to the ports of the Colonies belonging to the Enemy, and direct back to the ports of the United States.—3. the Order does not prohibit them from going direct from the ports of this Kingdom to the colonial ports in the West-India Islands belonging to the Enemy; and it is not intended to prevent them from proceeding from this Kingdom with colonial produce to the Enemy's ports, whenever Parliament shall have decided on the duties to be imposed on such Exportation.—4. American vessels may continue to trade from the ports of this Kingdom to the ports of the Enemy, and from the ports of the Enemy to this Kingdom, and from the ports of his Majesty's Allies to the Enemy's ports, but not from the Enemy's ports to the ports of his Majesty's Allies direct, nor from America to the ports of his Majesty's Allies, with colonial produce.—5. There is reason to believe that an Order in Council will issue, regulating the periods at which notice shall be considered to have been received of the Orders in council, of the 11th instant, in the United States of America: by which regulation, vessels that shall have cleared, or shall clear out from any port in America, before the 20th of January next, shall be considered to have cleared out before notice of the Order; and vessels, which shall clear out between the 20th of January and the 10th of February, will be liable to be detained, subject to the Question, whether they had begun to be laden before notice had arrived at the port from whence they sailed. From the 10th of February, all American vessels will be considered as having begun to lade after notice, and will thereby be subject to provisions of the aforesaid Order.—6. Certificates of Origin which may be on board vessels which shall have sailed previous to the notice of this Order at the port from whence they sailed, will not be required to be delivered up.—7. There is also reason to believe that no Duty is intended to be laid on the re-exportation of any articles which are the produce of the Soil of Neutral Nations, with the exception of Cotton; and that the trade between this Country and the ports of the Enemy's colonies by Neutrals, will be regulated by licence, and confined to the export of British manufactures, until the meeting of Parliament: and that the trade between this Country by Neutrals, with the colonies of the Enemy in the West Indies and South America, will be placed on the same footing.—JOHN GRAY, Secretary.